



# The Near Southside Plan

April 1997

**City of Columbus**

Gregory S. Lashutka, *Mayor*

**Department of Trade and Development**

George J. Arnold, *Director*

**Planning Office**

Stephen R. McClary, *Administrator*

# **THE NEAR SOUTHSIDE PLAN**

Area Planning Series

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This plan, an extension of the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, is intended as a reference document for the city of Columbus, residents, the business community, and developers. It provides guidelines for policy development and decision making for the Near Southside community. If there are questions regarding the content or interpretation of the information in this plan, please contact the Planning Division, 99 N. Front Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 or call 645-8502.

Adopted by City Council on April 7, 1997 as the official plan for the Near Southside area.

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

On April 7, 1997 City Council adopted the Near Southside Plan as an official guide for development in the Near Southside area. This plan is another in a series of neighborhood plans that have been prepared to safeguard and enhance the quality of life for Columbus residents.

Our city has experienced exceptional growth, an increasing tax base, expanding employment market, and many other positive changes during the past several years. Simultaneously, the Near Southside is experiencing an increasing unemployment rate, deteriorating housing conditions, lack of investment, and high rate of crime.

To meet the challenges of the future, the Planning Division has developed this plan with assistance and input from numerous neighborhood organizations, area residents, business and development interests, and governmental agencies. It is our goal that this document be used by the private and public sectors as a working reference of planning guidelines for the Near Southside area.

George J. Arnold, *Director*  
Department of Trade and Development

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Near Southside Plan is the product of a process that began in July 1995. Its preparation was made possible only through the efforts and contributions of many individuals and organizations. The Planning Division extends its appreciation to members of the Steering Committee and subcommittees for their participation in the planning process.

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A special thanks goes to Dick Ritchie, Beth Clark Steve Quinlan, and Stephen McClary for their insightful review and comment on the draft of Near Southside Plan.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Near Southside Plan is to establish a series of guidelines that will manage development and encourage revitalization of residential and commercial areas. The Plan will be used as a principal reference document by developers, neighborhood organizations, city staff, Development Commission, and City Council when making decisions concerning the physical development of the Near Southside.

The guidelines and recommendations outlined in the Near Southside Plan are intended to allow for a degree of flexibility, however, deviations from this Plan should be carefully evaluated.

## **THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS**

The Near Southside planning process involves the preparation of a planning study to address redevelopment and revitalization of the area. The study is conducted by staff of the Planning Division in cooperation with residents and representatives of public and private sectors. This study is designed to bring the planning process to the community and to address physical problems and opportunities of the Near Southside.

The Near Southside planning process has been designed for implementation in several phases. Each phase is tailored to reflect the particular nature and characteristics of the Near Southside. Based upon existing information, resources, and community support, the timetable for completion of the Near Southside Plan will vary with the complexity of the issues.

### **ANALYSIS**

This phase of the process examines all available information in the Near Southside planning area to identify conditions, trends, problems, and opportunities. The analysis of planning issues involves extensive community and city agency interaction and cooperation.

### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

This activity develops planning guidelines and recommendations based on the results of issue analysis. The content is dependent upon the particular element being addressed and the degree of consensus reached among the planning participants. The plan's recommendations are concerned with physical development, redevelopment, and preservation activities for the Near Southside.

### **REVIEW AND ADOPTION**

It is the goal of the Planning Division to have the Near Southside Plan adopted as the official city of Columbus plan. To accomplish this goal, the Near Southside Plan is first subjected to a review process involving a committee with a broad spectrum of community interests. After the review committee has endorsed the plan, it is submitted to the Columbus Development Commission for a public hearing. The final step in the process is adoption by City Council.

### **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

To assure effective and timely implementation of the Near Southside Plan, several guidelines are recommended: ~ Communication should be maintained among the individuals and organizations that participated in the planning process. The Plan should be monitored and reviewed periodically. As conditions change and new issues are identified, amendments should be prepared and submitted to City Council as appropriate.

Community participation in the development process must continue. Citizens and neighborhood organizations should interact and cooperate with development interests toward mutually beneficial solutions. ~ Recommendations should be prioritized as to their importance and relevance as viewed by Near Southside community groups and residents.

## INTRODUCTION

The Near Southside planning area is a fully developed central city neighborhood consisting of residential, commercial, institutional, and manufacturing land uses. The area's population is slightly over 23,000 people, and it is approximately 2,200 acres in size. In the planning area, single and multi-family residential development is the dominant land use. Commercial development is highly concentrated along Livingston and Parsons Avenues while manufacturing uses are primarily located along Alum Creek Drive.

The Near Southside planning area is bounded by 1-70 on the north, Alum Creek on the east, Frebis Avenue on the south and Parsons Avenue on the west.

There are a number of issues that negatively impact the quality of life for residents living in the Near Southside planning area. Foremost among them are the abundance of vacant lots and houses scattered throughout the area. Corridors such as those found along Livingston and Parsons Avenues have empty and underutilized commercial buildings. Other issues of interest include traffic congestion during morning and evening peak periods along Livingston and Parsons Avenues, areawide flooding, and the need for additional parkland and recreational facilities. These represent some of the issues that confront residents of the Near Southside.

The City of Columbus has collaboratively worked with neighborhood organizations, community residents, business owners, investors, and developers since July 1995 to address issues of the area. The Near Southside Plan is the product of this process. The Plan addresses issues including, but not limited to, deteriorating housing conditions, abundance of vacant lots and houses, decline of commercial corridors, aging infrastructure, lack of historic preservation, increased traffic congestion, and insufficient parkland and recreational facilities.

The Near Southside Plan is divided into the following sections: land use, housing, traffic, streets and circulation, parks and recreational facilities, sanitary sewer service, storm water drainage and street lighting, historic preservation, economic development, safety, community service, and urban design. Each section of the Plan contains a discussion of the existing conditions, statements of goals, and identification of planning issues and corresponding recommendations. Following each recommendation is the name of an organization or agency whose participation is important for the implementation of the recommendation.

Policies, concepts, and/or research findings have been extracted from the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, Parsons Avenue Business District Market Study, and Driving Park Business District Market Study and incorporated into the Near Southside Plan.



## LAND USE

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Near Southside Planning area contains approximately 2,208 acres of land. Of the total acreage, roughly 1,656 acres (75 percent) are zoned for residential use. The remaining 552 acres (25 percent) are composed of non-residential zoning classifications such as institutional, manufacturing, and commercial development.

Major institutional land uses include Children's Hospital, located at Parsons and Livingston Avenues, Regency Manor and DeVry Institute on Alum Creek Drive. Other institutional land uses include: South High School on Ann Street, Fairwood Elementary School on Fairwood Avenue, Livingston Avenue Elementary School on Heyl Avenue, Deshler Elementary School on Deshler Avenue, Heyl Avenue Elementary School on Reinhard Avenue, and Kent Elementary School on Gault Street. There are two public libraries in the planning area: Driving Park Library on Livingston Avenue and Parsons Avenue Library on Parsons Avenue.

The Near Southside has two regional scale parks: Fairwood Park and Driving Park. The area also has six neighborhood scale parks: Livingston, Palsgrove, Kobacker, Karns, Roosevelt, and Deshler. Martin Parkland is an undeveloped park. The majority of the planning area's manufacturing land uses are located along Alum Creek Drive and the area of Frebis Avenue east of Burstock Road. Among these manufacturing land uses are Frebis Industrial Park and Alum Creek Commerce Park. Other manufacturing land uses located in the planning area are Techneglas Company, located on the south side of Frebis Avenue between Gilbert Street and Ohio Avenue and Container Management Company located on the north side of Livingston Avenue at Rhoads Avenue.

The major commercial areas are located along Livingston and Parsons Avenues. There are some commercial land uses on Whittier Street, Frebis Avenue, and Lockbourne Road; however, the character of the area is residential. Other areas of commercial land uses are scattered throughout the Near Southside.

Throughout the Near Southside planning area, there are vacant lots and structures. A challenge for the Near Southside area is how best to attract and encourage development of the vacant lots and structures in the area. This is a question that confronts area residents, business associations, and government officials.

The lack of adequate parking and available land for additional parking is of concern for some business owners in the Near Southside planning area. The parking problem is most prevalent along the commercial strips on Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, Whittier Street, Frebis Avenue, and Lockbourne Road. Ways to lessen the parking problem confront business owners in the planning area.

The following goals are designed to encourage and support thoughtful development and redevelopment of land in the Near Southside area.

### GOALS

- Preserve and protect the community's residential areas.
- Provide for the co-existence of an appropriate mix of development and land uses.
- Provide a supportive environment for commercial development.
- Build a community where residential and commercial development supports economic and social revitalization.

Below is a list of land use issues and corresponding recommendations of the Near Southside.

#### *Issue*

There is an underutilization of vacant lots and buildings throughout the planning area. A vacant lot is located at the corner of Oakwood and Livingston Avenues, and another at Kimball Place and Livingston Avenue. Some vacant structures include a theater on Livingston Avenue, a convenience store at the corner of Livingston and Fairwood Avenues, and a theater at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Gates Street.

#### *Recommendations*

- Encourage commercial development of vacant lots on Livingston Avenue. The following uses should be considered: fast food/ family restaurant, video store, bank, hardware store, discount shoe chain, second hand children's/maternity shop. (Economic Development Division, Neighborhood Development Division, Columbus Urban Growth Corporation, and developers)
- Encourage the conversion of the theater on Livingston Avenue into medical offices or other type of medical use. A portion of the theater is currently being leased by a podiatrist, psychologist, and dentist. (Development Regulation Division, Neighborhood Development Division, and Economic Development Division)
- Encourage commercial development such as a theater for the vacant building located at Parsons Avenue and Gates Street. (Development Regulation Division and Neighborhood Development Division)
- Encourage commercial development such as a convenience store on the northwest corner of Livingston and Fairwood Avenues and at the northeast corner of Whittier Street and Lockbourne Road. (Development Regulation Division and Neighborhood Development Division)
- Encourage the following types of commercial development for vacant lots and structures along Parsons Avenue: off-price clothing stores, deep discount drug store, second run cinema, fast food chain, family restaurant, camping and fishing supplies, bowling alley/video arcade, hardware store, coffee shop, weight center, music/video store, children's apparel, or crafts store. (Development Regulation Division, Neighborhood Development Division, and Economic Development Division)<sup>1</sup>
- Rehabilitate vacant residential structures through out the planning area.(Neighborhood Development Division and Development Regulation Division)
- Acquire tax delinquent properties for possible residential and commercial development (Land Management and Relocation Division and Neighborhood Development Division)

#### *Issue*

A need to appropriately zone portions of the Near Southside Planning area.

#### *Recommendations*

- Rezone areas and parcels within the planning boundaries to reflect current land use as appropriate. The following areas have been identified for study: 1 ) the area bounded by Mooberry Street on the north, Fairwood Avenue on the east, Gault Street on the south, and Bedford Avenue on the west; and 2) the area bounded by Mooberry Street on the north, the first alley east of Oakwood Avenue on the east, the first alley south of Newton Street on the south, and Carpenter Street on the west (Planning Division, Development Regulation Division, community groups and residents)

#### *Issue*

Lack of design guidelines for new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

#### *Recommendations*

- Develop design guidelines that foster a sense of community and improve the level of safety for pedestrians. (Planning Division, Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, and community residents)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Christopher D. Boring, Parsons Avenue Business Market Study, May 1994

#### *Issue*

Lack of adequate parking for commercial and institutional establishments along Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, Whittier Street, and Frebis Avenue. The result of insufficient parking in these areas is increased traffic and utilization of limited parking spaces in residential areas.

#### *Recommendations*

- Concentrate commercial development in contiguous locations along Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, Frebis Avenue, Whittier Street, and Lockbourne Road. (Development Regulation Division, Neighborhood Development Division, Driving Park Business Association, Parsons Avenue Merchant Association, and developers)
- Encourage shared parking between businesses, as well as between businesses and neighborhood institutions such as churches. (Development Regulation Division, Driving Park Business Association, and Parsons Avenue Merchants Association)
- Monitor commercial development proposals to ensure that:
  - Pedestrian access is given priority attention,
  - Development is accessible by transit, and
  - Bicycle access is accommodated and encouraged. (Development Regulation Division, Public Service Department, Central Ohio Transit Authority, Driving Park Business Association, Parsons Avenue Merchants Association, and Livingston Avenue Merchants Association)

#### *Issue*

Typical of most older inner city neighborhoods, the Near Southside planning area has developed primarily as a residential neighborhood. Within the planning area, examples exist where institutions and businesses are expanding into residential areas. In these instances, determining an appropriate balance of residential, institutional, and industrial land uses is of concern to the community.

#### *Recommendations*

- Encourage institutions and industries located within the planning area to develop a master plan in conjunction with the city and community. (Planning Division, Development Regulation Division, institutions, industries, and community residents)
- Establish guidelines for maintaining the residential and historic character of neighborhoods impacted by new and/or expanding institutions and industries. Guidelines should include standards for buffering and building setbacks. (Planning Division, Development Regulation Division, Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, institutions, industries, and community residents)

### **LAND USE AND INDUSTRIAL POLICIES OF THE COLUMBUS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Columbus Comprehensive Plan has many land use policies that have applicability to the Near Southside. The following Comprehensive Plan land use policies are of particular relevance and should be applied to the Near Southside planning area:

1. Maintain an appropriate mix of land uses in all neighborhoods,
2. Require compatibility of adjacent land use,
3. Provide technical and financial support to assist in the revitalization of neighborhoods and activity centers in all parts of the city,
4. Encourage maintenance and/or provision of infrastructure, parks, and other services in coordination with revitalization efforts in an area, and
5. Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of buildings over demolition by establishing procedures for handling nuisance abatement cases.

In addition to land use policies, the Columbus Comprehensive Plan also identifies policies for developed and undeveloped industrial sites. The Comprehensive Plan industrial policies are relevant and should be applied to the portion of the Near Southside planning area along Alum Creek Drive between Livingston and Frebis Avenues, and on Frebis Avenue between Alum Creek Drive and Burstock Place. These policies include:

1. provide amenity improvements to industrial areas;

2. protect existing neighborhoods from significant noise odor, traffic, and other negative impacts by providing appropriate barriers;
3. encourage industries that will provide employment opportunities to residents of surrounding neighborhoods;
4. enhance the visual quality of the surrounding physical environment;
5. pursue programs of land banking and land assembly;
6. require appropriate buffering to be compatible with adjacent uses;
7. provide financial incentives if necessary; and
8. provide additional incentives to industries that will provide a substantial employment base for the city.

The land use and industrial policies found in the Columbus Comprehensive Plan should be applied to the Near Southside as deemed appropriate. These policies provide an excellent framework for guiding and maintaining developed and undeveloped portions of the Near Southside planning area.

### **URBAN VILLAGE**

An emerging concept that may be applied to the Near Southside in general and the Driving Park area in particular is that of an urban village. An urban village can be thought of as a self-contained community offering most of what small towns can offer places to live, work, shop and attend school in an environment conducive to walking and biking as well as driving.

The Near Southside is characteristic of an urban village. However, the area is too large to provide the appropriate environment for the urban village concept. The size prohibits development of places to work, shop and attend school that would be in walking or biking distances for all residents. Therefore, the Near Southside should be broken down into smaller components. The Driving Park community represents approximately twenty percent of the Near Southside planning area. The Driving Park area is an established community and it should be pursued for instituting the urban village concept.

Over the years, Driving Park has emerged from a rural community with open fields to a track for race cars to the urban atmosphere of today. Driving Park is comprised of: single family, duplexes, and multi-family housing types; a recreation center; regional and neighborhood parks; and commercial establishments along Livingston Avenue. The area is also accessible by automobile and public transit. Pedestrian access between residential, commercial, and recreational areas is limited in the area.

Further, employment opportunities exist with retail, medical, and institutional establishments in the Driving Park Plaza and a manufacturing company located at the intersection of Livingston and Rhoads avenues. City of Columbus offices are located immediately south of the Driving Park area on Fairwood Avenue. Two schools are located in the area: Fairwood Elementary on Fairwood Avenue and Kent Elementary on Gault Street.

The Driving Park area is represented by three community groups: Driving Park Area Commission, Driving Park Civic Association, and Driving Park Business Association. Driving Park is bounded by 1-70 on the north, railroad tracks west of Nelson Road on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Studer Avenue on the West.

In applying the urban village concept to the Driving Park area, Livingston Avenue should be viewed as the focal point for the community. Livingston Avenue is a symbol of local identity and center for shopping, employment opportunities, and community interaction. The residential areas to the north and south should be viewed as the living component of the community. To encourage cohesiveness of the Driving Park community, land uses should be connected by streets, sidewalks, and greenways.

In addition, the following list of policies and guidelines are designed to guide the formation of Driving Park as an urban village.

- ❑ Create a compact, new livable residential environment that encourages pedestrian movement as an alternative to the traditional dependency on automobiles
- ❑ Maximize public investment in infrastructure services.
- ❑ Maintain the existing boundaries of the Driving Park area.

- ❑ Land uses in urban villages should include mixed housing, recreational facilities, schools, retail centers industries, and employment based commercial development. The Driving Park area currently has a good housing stock. New land uses should focus on retail shops and restaurants.
- ❑ Street design controls should be carefully considered to encourage easy access between the village and the surrounding area.

## **LAND ASSEMBLY**

The Near Southside is a mostly developed community with some opportunity for expansion or erection of new businesses. However, the need for additional businesses providing employment opportunities and goods and services such as a family restaurant, shoe repair shop, children's apparel shop, and coffee shop exists in the Near Southside area.

The Christopher D. Boring market study for the Driving Park Business District and the Parsons Avenue Business District supports the need for additional businesses providing various goods and services in the area. Further, the 1990 unemployment rate in the area was 12.6 percent compared to Columbus 1990 rate of 4.5 percent. Franklin County had a 1990 unemployment rate of 3.9 percent.

One way of creating employment opportunities and providing area residents with needed goods and services is through land assembly. Land assembly involves assembling land. Vacant land and structures in the Near Southside planning area along Parsons Avenue, Livingston Avenue, and Whittier Street should be purchased as they become available for possible land assembly. A number of sites have been identified for land assembly based on their proximity to commercial and industrial land uses and location on arterial streets. These sites include:

### **Parsons Avenue**

1. Eastside of Parsons Avenue between Jackson Street and Denton Alley; and
2. Westside of Parsons Avenue between Parsons Avenue Library and Kossuth Street.

### **Livingston Avenue**

3. Southside of Livingston Avenue between South Champion and Oakwood Avenues; and
4. Southside of Livingston Avenue between Kelton and Ellsworth Avenues.
5. Northside of Livingston Avenue at Oakwood Avenue.

### **Whittier Street**

6. Northside of Whittier Street at Carpenter Street Jetta's three buildings;
7. Northside of Whittier Street (940-952) between South Ohio and South Champion Avenues;
8. Southside of Whittier Street at Wilson Avenue; and
9. Northside of Whittier Street at Oakwood Avenue.

The Columbus Urban Growth Corporation is a not-for-profit real estate development group organized to promote increased commercial and industrial development, investment, and job creation within the central city. The corporation will address land assembly issues in the central city and should be considered for financial support of land assembly projects in the Near Southside. .

A number of the identified land assembly sites are occupied. As sites become available, purchase should be considered by entities such as the Columbus Urban Growth Corporation, non-profit and for-profit agencies, as well as governmental bodies. The ultimate goal will be to make the Near Southside as economically healthy and viable as possible.

## HOUSING

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

Housing provides shelter and represents a major financial and social commitment to the community. Housing acts as an anchor to a neighborhood and can serve as the bedrock of social life.

Fostering new home ownership opportunities presents a significant challenge in the Near Southside area. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of occupied housing units in the planning area decreased from 8,484 to 7,965. There were 4,752 (56 percent) homeowners in 1980 and renter occupied housing units accounted for 3,732 (44 percent) of the total number of occupied housing units.

In 1990, the Near Southside had 8,987 housing units. Of the total housing units, 7,965 housing units were occupied and 1,022 were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 4,167 (46 percent) were owner occupied and 3,798 (42 percent) were renter occupied. The remaining 1,022 (12 percent) housing units were vacant. In 1990, several Near Southside areas had a high percentage of renters. The areas include:

1. Livingston Avenue on the north, Twenty-Second Street on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Parsons Avenue on the west;
2. the area immediately east of Eighteenth Street; and
3. an area bounded by Livingston Avenue on the north, Alum Creek on the east, Frebis Avenue on the south, and the railroad tracks on the west.

Also in 1990, the average rent contract was \$275.00 for the area. This average represents 29.3 percent of renters annual income.

To evaluate the condition of the area's housing stock, a structural condition survey was conducted by city staff and members of the Housing, Land Use, and Economic Development Subcommittee for the Near Southside Plan. Categories of sound, minor deficiencies, major deficiencies, and dilapidated were used to describe the current condition of the housing stock in the planning area. "Sound" describes property that is in very good condition. The foundation is solid and structure is sound. The roof is good, windows are in good condition and clean, roof gutters and downspouts are solid or new, and the eaves, if applicable, are in good condition.

"Minor deficiencies" describes property that requires work beyond normal maintenance. The foundation is solid, but has loose brick or stone and the roof may be old or worn. Window sills may show wear or need painting, downspout or roof gutters loose and hanging, extensive painting required, and structure may show signs of deterioration.

"Major deficiencies" describes property requiring a substantial amount of repair work. Holes and cracks are in the foundation and structure is leaning. The roof is sagging or rotted and porch is sagging or leaning. Gutters and downspouts are rusted or missing. Parts of building are sagging or rotted, and chimney is crumbling or has fallen down.

"Dilapidated" represents property that is unlivable and has no foundation or has experienced serious settling. Windows are broken, frames rotting, and the porch is unsafe for use. Gutters and drains are rusted or missing, building is sagging, holes are in the roof, and chimney has fallen partially or totally.

Results from the survey show that the majority of the housing stock in the planning area is in sound condition. However, concentrations of housing in the categories of "major deficiencies" and "dilapidated" include the areas bounded by:

1. Mooberry Street on the north, Berkeley Road on the east, Livingston Avenue on the south, and Linwood Avenue on the west;
2. Columbus Street on the north, Linwood Avenue on the east, Siebert Street on the south, and Twenty-Second Avenue on the west;
3. Columbus Street on the north, Twenty- Second Avenue on the east; Whittier Street on the south; and Gilbert Street on the west; and
4. the Southside of Hanford Street between Seventeenth Street and Eighteenth Street.

In 1990, the average household income for the Near Southside was \$24,223. Since the majority of Near Southside residents are of modest income, home ownership remains out of reach for many. Therefore, the goal of increasing home ownership opportunities will require a variety of innovative approaches. It will also demand greater emphasis on helping low and moderate income renters to take more of an ownership stake in their housing and, wherever possible, to make the transition to home ownership.

The following goals have been developed to guide the preservation and maintenance of housing structures in the Near Southside area.

## GOALS

- ◆ *Increase the number of owner-occupied housing units.*
- ◆ *Build a community where housing opportunities, resources, and services support the preservation of community stability.*

Several issues must be addressed if these goals are to be met. Following are descriptions of these issues, as well as sets of associated recommendations.

### *Issue*

There is a greater percentage of rental-occupied housing than owner-occupied housing units. In 1990, 46 percent of the occupied housing units were owner-occupied. Residents of the area would like to see the home ownership rate increase to 65 percent by the year 2001.

### *Recommendations*

- Identify and distribute information on public and private programs that provide financial assistance to individuals and families seeking home ownership opportunities. (community groups and residents)
- Develop a housing resource information center at the Driving Park Office, 1376 E. Livingston Avenue and the Livingston Park Neighborhood Improvement Association Office, 640 S. Ohio Avenue. The purpose will be to provide information to community residents on home selection, rehabilitation, purchase, and financial assistance. (Neighborhood Development Division, community groups and residents)
- Provide pre-purchase information to first-time homebuyers and housing counseling after purchases. (Neighborhood Development Division, developers, lending institutions, non-profit and for-profit housing agencies)
- Develop a quarterly lecture and advice series on housing issues, with a special focus on home ownership. (Neighborhood Development Division, lending institutions, Columbus Board of Realtors, and community groups)
- Utilize the City's Land Reutilization Program as a means of providing opportunities for residents to purchase a home. (Land Management and Relocation Division, Neighborhood Development Division, and non-profit and for-profit housing agencies)
- Encourage Habitat for Humanity to recruit Near Southside area residents for its sweat-equity home ownership program. (Neighborhood Development Division, and community groups and residents)
- Encourage Habitat for Humanity to engage in single family home rehabilitation in the Near Southside planning area. (community residents)

### *Issue*

There is a high concentration of housing showing signs of major deficiencies and dilapidation in the Near Southside planning area. There is also housing in the Near Southside planning area not characterized as having major deficiencies or being dilapidated but do show signs of deteriorating conditions.

### *Recommendations*

- Encourage rehabilitation in areas of the Near Southside with housing conditions categorized as having major deficiencies or is dilapidated including but not limited to the following:
  1. Mooberry Street on the north, Berkeley Road on the east, Livingston Avenue on the south, and Linwood Avenue on the west;
  2. Columbus Street on the north, Linwood Avenue on the east, Siebert Street on the south, and Twenty-Second Avenue on the west;

3. Columbus Street on the north, Twenty-Second Avenue on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Gilbert Street on the west; and
  4. South side of Hanford Street between Seventeenth Street and Eighteenth Street. (Neighborhood Development Division, nonprofit and for-profit housing agencies)
- Improve livability in residential areas by improving maintenance, correcting code violations, and undertaking long-term prevention measures. (Neighborhood Development Division, property owners, and non-profit and for-profit agencies)
  - Assist with upgrading the housing stock using programs offering rehabilitation, grants, low-interest loans, various tax incentives and other means of funding that support private and public initiatives. (Neighborhood Development Division, lending institutions, and non-profit and for-profit housing agencies)
  - Encourage private financial institutions to assist homeowners in upgrading the housing stock through the provision of low interest loans and financial counseling. (Neighborhood Development Division and non-profit and for-profit housing agencies)
  - Provide property maintenance workshops for homeowners and landlords. (Building Industry Association)
  - Develop a homeowner maintenance program for necessary large home repair projects, whereby a portion of a mortgage payment is deposited into an escrow account. (Neighborhood Development Division and lending institutions)

#### *Issue*

There is a lack of housing programs to support independence for the Near Southside elderly population.

#### *Recommendations*

- Encourage the conversion of apartment complexes on Lilley Avenue to housing for senior citizens should they become available. (Neighborhood Development Division and nonprofit and for-profit housing agencies)
- Work with the elderly population and service providers to target financial support for elderly homeowners and to enhance existing home maintenance and repair programs such as CHORES. (Neighborhood Development Division)
- Develop a housing assistance service plan to guide a coordinated and comprehensive outreach effort to help the elderly meet their housing needs. (human/social service agencies)



## **TRAFFIC, STREETS, & CIRCULATION**

### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

#### **Streets**

The street system in the Near Southside is vital to the well-being of the community. Residents depend on the system to get from their homes to shopping centers and places of employment. Businesses rely on them to bring customers and deliveries.

Traffic in the Near Southside is generated by public schools, retail shops, commercial establishments, medical offices and facilities, several industrial companies, and individuals who use the area as a pass through on their way to work or to conduct business in the downtown area. When the traffic created by businesses and institutions is combined with that of the surrounding residential areas, arterial streets such as Livingston and Parsons Avenues, become congested. This congestion is particularly acute during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

1-70, located on the northern boundary of the planning area, is a high volume, freeway with varying numbers of lanes and varying right-of-way widths. 1-70 is part of the federally funded Freeway Management Program now under design. The project will add detectors and television cameras to detect freeway congestion and provide changeable message signs to direct motorists to alternate routes. Implementation is anticipated by the year 2001. The noise generated by the high volume of vehicles on 170 has become problematic for residents living along Mooberry Street.

In addition, the Public Service Department will add traffic signals on Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, and Alum Creek Drive to the City's computerized system during 1997-98. Also, the Public Service Department as part of the a citywide program will upgrade traffic signs and school flashers in the planning area as capital improvements funding becomes available over the next five years. These efforts will help solve some of the traffic signal problems that exist in the planning area.

The Near Southside planning area is served by a number of arterial streets described in The Columbus Thoroughfare Plan, adopted as part of the Columbus Comprehensive Plan on December 6, 1993. Among the streets in the planning area identified as arterials in the Thoroughfare Plan are Livingston Avenue, Alum Creek Drive, Parsons Avenue, Lockbourne Road, Ohio Avenue, Champion Avenue, Mooberry Street, Kelton Avenue, Miller Avenue, Whittier Street, Thurman Avenue, Frebis Avenue, and Fairwood Avenue.

A number of the arterial streets mentioned meet the minimum right-of-way requirements as defined in the Thoroughfare Plan. However streets such as Livingston Avenue and Thurman Avenue do not meet the minimum right-of-way requirements and the only way to increase the size of these streets is through demolition of existing structures. The Near Southside is developed and little opportunity exists for expansion of roadways. The Thoroughfare Plan acknowledges the limitations of densely developed areas and addresses this concern as follows: "Urban areas where extensive development has taken place and no right-of-way has been acquired for future widening, the stated minimum right-of-way and pavement required for such roadways will be determined at the time a roadway improvement is recommended, and on the basis of neighborhood concern. For such roadways, the arterial type shall serve as the functional classification of the roadways."

#### **Sidewalks**

In 1996, staff of the Planning Division conducted a survey in the Near Southside to determine location and condition of sidewalks in the planning area. This survey revealed that there is a great degree of inconsistency of sidewalk type and condition throughout the planning area. This is of concern because the planning area lacks pedestrian sidewalks from schools and parks to surrounding neighborhoods. Consequently, additional sidewalks need to be constructed that will help make the Near Southside more pedestrian friendly.

#### **Street Improvement Planning**

Increased traffic volumes and the resulting congestion have increased the need for turn lanes on Livingston Avenue between Rhoads and Parsons Avenues. The problem is partly the result of vehicular traffic from areas east of the planning area using Livingston Avenue to get into the downtown area. The constant flow of traffic makes its extremely

difficult and dangerous for vehicles traveling westbound on Livingston Avenue between Rhoads and Parsons Avenues to make a left turn off of Livingston Avenue. An example is the problem experienced by individuals turning left onto Rhoads Avenue from Livingston Avenue. Parsons Avenue has similar turn lane problems for vehicular traffic traveling southbound and northbound between Livingston and Frebis Avenues. Similar turn lane problems, but of a lesser degree, exist for eastbound and westbound vehicular traffic on Whittier Street and Frebis Avenue.

The city of Columbus has undertaken or is preparing to undertake several projects that will improve circulation within the Near Southside community:

- Construct a westbound turn lane and a northbound turn lane at Livingston Avenue and Lockbourne Road,
- Turn lane at Alum Creek and Livingston Avenue and on Livingston Avenue between Nelson Road and College Avenue, and
- Six lanes under 1-70 on Livingston Avenue east of Nelson Road to extend turn lanes at the 1-70 westbound on ramp and at Creek Drive.

### **Public Transit**

Five Central Ohio Transit Authority bus routes serve the Near Southside planning area. Of the five routes, four are local and one is crosstown. These bus routes provide area residents with access to downtown Columbus, The Ohio State University, shopping centers, and some employment areas of Columbus.

### **Bikeways**

There is one bikepath in the planning area that connects Driving Park to Fairwood Park. Plans are in progress for an off-street bikeway along Alum Creek that will be part of a regional system. One alignment being considered would parallel Livingston Avenue and Alum Creek Drive.

The following goals and recommendations have been developed as a guide for improving the Near Southside traffic, streets, and circulation.

### **GOALS**

- ◆ *Provide appropriate sidewalks and crosswalks to improve pedestrian circulation.*
- ◆ *Improve signalization, street alignments, and traffic circulation patterns to ensure efficient traffic movement.*

The following issues have been identified and recommendations formulated to help improve the Near Southside traffic, streets, and circulation.

#### *Issue*

There is a need to consider additional traffic signals on Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, Whittier Street, Frebis Avenue, and Lockbourne Road.

#### *Recommendations*

- Study traffic signals on Livingston Avenue between Rhoads Avenue and Nelson Road to determine if the traffic signal on the west side of the railroad tracks could be relocated to Rhoads Avenue south of Livingston Avenue. (Division of Traffic Engineering and Parking)
- Install and upgrade traffic signals on Parsons Avenue, Whittier Street, Frebis Avenue, and Lockbourne Road as needs become known and funds become available. (Division of Traffic Engineering and Parking)

#### *Issue*

There is deteriorating street infrastructure in the planning area. Many streets in the planning area are in need of repair, improvement, and/or reconstruction.

#### *Recommendations*

- Make improvements to streets in need of repair, improvement, and/or reconstruction throughout the Near Southside planning area. (Division of Engineering and Construction)

- ❑ Construct curbs and gutters on Whittier Street between Lockbourne Road and Bulen Avenue. (Division of Engineering and Construction)
- ❑ Construct curbs and gutters on the west side of Rhoads Avenue between Whittier Street and Livingston Avenue. (Division of Engineering and Construction)
- ❑ Identify capital improvements and other funds that may be used for street improvements in the planning area. (Neighborhood Development Division and Division of Engineering and Construction)

#### *Issue*

There is a need for additional turn lanes for intersections in the planning area. These improvements may require costly right-of-way and relocation of private businesses and residences.

#### *Recommendations*

- ❑ Construct turn lanes at Whittier Street and Parsons Avenue, Linwood Avenue and Whittier Street, Wilson Avenue and Whittier Street, Oakwood Avenue and Whittier Street. (Division of Engineering and Construction and Division of Traffic Engineering)
- ❑ Construct a center turning lane on Parsons Avenue from 1-70 to Frebis Avenue and Livingston Avenue from Alum Creek Drive to Parsons Avenue. (Division of Engineering and Construction)
- ❑ Monitor intersections in the Near Southside planning area to identify problem areas and make improvements. (Division of Traffic Engineering)

#### *Issue*

A need exists for additional, improved, and safe sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the Near Southside planning area. The absence of sidewalks forces individuals to walk in streets and, in some instances, inhibits their ability to move from place to place.

The recommendations listed below may alleviate some of the problems associated with lack of or poorly maintained sidewalks in the planning area.

#### *Recommendations*

- ❑ Construct sidewalks and curbs as needed along Alum Creek Drive between Livingston and Frebis Avenues, Lockbourne Road between Livingston and Frebis Avenues, Whittier Street between Parsons and Fairwood Avenues, Livingston Avenue between Rhoads Avenue and 1-70 to the exit ramp, and on the west side of Fairwood Avenue between Deshler and Frebis Avenues and Frebis Avenue between Parsons Avenue and Alum Creek Drive. (Division of Engineering and Construction)
- ❑ Construct sidewalks on Stone Avenue between Eighteenth and Gilbert streets. (Division of Engineering and Construction)
- ❑ Provide a crosswalk for Deshler Elementary School between Miller and Ellsworth Avenues. (Division of Traffic Engineering)

#### *Issue*

Improve public transit stops and service in the Near Southside planning area. Improving Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) bus service may encourage more residents to use public transit.

#### *Recommendations*

- ❑ Extend the Whittier Avenue bus route to continue east to Fairwood Avenue, north to Livingston Avenue, east to Rhoads Avenue, south to Whittier Street, and west back to the Whittier and Seymour Avenues bus stop. (COTA)
- ❑ Construct passenger shelters where appropriate along Parsons Avenue, Livingston Avenue, Whittier Street, and Frebis Avenue. (COTA)
- ❑ Add bus service on Fairwood Avenue and Alum Creek Drive that transports residents of the Near Southside to downtown Columbus and employment centers throughout the Columbus area. (COTA)
- ❑ Increase the number of bus trips being made in the Near Southside planning area during the morning and afternoon peak hours. (COTA)

*Issue*

There is a need for additional bikeways in the Near Southside planning area. The planning area currently has one bike connector located between Fairwood and Driving parks.

*Recommendations*

- Determine the feasibility of creating bikeways in the planning area that connects parks, residential, and commercial areas together. In determining the feasibility, study the following for their potential impact on the planning area:
  1. Provide a bikeway connection from Driving to Wolfe and Franklin parks.
  2. Explore creation of a system of bikeways connecting parks, schools, and other institutions.
- Provide a bikeway along Alum Creek Drive connecting residential areas, west of the railroad, to employment centers and DeVry Institute located along Alum Creek Drive.
- When the Alum Creek Bike Path reaches the area, provide an east-west connection to the residential areas of the planning area.
- Provide a river crossing to the east.
- Examine bicycle parking facilities in the planning area and propose improvements.
- Construct bike lanes on Alum Creek Drive between Frebis Avenue and Williams Road.

*Issue*

Residents living along Mooberry Street are negatively impacted by noise created by the high volume of vehicular traffic on I-70.

*Recommendations*

- Work with Ohio Department of Transportation and Division of Engineering and Construction to determine the most effective way to reduce the noise heard by residents living along Mooberry Street between Eighteenth Avenue and Nelson Road. (community groups and residents)

## PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department operates and maintains nine public parks within the Near Southside planning area. Of the nine parks, six are neighborhood, two are community, and one is neighborhood open space. The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department classifies a neighborhood park as a developed park serving a neighborhood within a half mile radius. This type of park usually contains playground, basketball court, picnic tables, walking trail, and a field game area for activities such as baseball or softball. A neighborhood park may have a parking lot or shelter. A community park serves an area within a two mile radius and has more facilities than a neighborhood park. The neighborhood open space is a classification used to describe a park area with no playground or other facilities that is mowed regularly. Neighborhood open space may have picnic tables and benches.

The nine area parks provide residents with access to facilities for tennis, basketball, baseball, softball, football, swimming, and soccer. In addition, there are playgrounds, walking trails, bikepaths, shelter houses, and picnic areas.

The Recreation and Parks Department has targeted improvements for Fairwood Park including some general renovations, playground additions, and replacement of the swimming pool's mechanical and filter system. Sufficient parkland and recreational facilities are key elements in providing Near Southside residents with a quality living environment. The following goal has been developed as a guide in creating a community with adequate parks and recreational facilities.

### GOAL

- ◆ *Provide adequate parkland and recreation facilities to meet the needs of Near Southside residents.*

The goal can be met by addressing the issue and acting on the recommendation below.

#### *Issue*

The amount of existing parkland does not meet the City's goal of 5.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons in an area. In 1990, the planning area had a population of 23,071 persons. Using the goal of 5.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons, the planning area should have appropriately 127 acres of parkland. Currently, the area has approximately 77 acres of parkland.

#### *Recommendations*

- Acquire additional parkland through donations or purchase as opportunities present themselves to meet the city of Columbus goal of 5.5 acres of parkland for each 1,000 persons. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Establish a multi-generational center in the planning area when warranted by need and population characteristics. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Make improvements to the Martin Park site, located at 950 Wagner Street, to meet the needs of area residents. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Develop pedestrian connectors to link neighborhoods with park and recreation facilities. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate locations for future parks and recreation facilities. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Encourage land owners to donate or set aside land required for park and recreation facilities to the Recreation and Parks Department. (Recreation and Parks Department)
- Prioritize Near Southside recreation and parkland improvements projects. (Recreation and Parks Department and neighborhood organizations)
- Include Near Southside priority improvements projects in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and provide funding through a future bond package. (Recreation and Parks Department, Planning Division, and Neighborhood Development Division)
- Expand Driving Park Recreation Center south and east. Expansion on the south will allow for expansion of the gymnasium to regulation size, expanded weight room area and game room. Expansion to east will provide for an auditorium, additional meeting room, and expanded art room. (Recreation and Parks Department)

- When possible, expand existing parks to help meet the city's goal of 5.5 acres of parkland per 1000 persons.  
(Recreation and Parks Department)

In acquiring 50 additional acres of parkland to meet the City's goal, provisions from the Columbus Comprehensive Plan for neighborhood parks may be applied to the Near Southside area. Below is a list of some provisions identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

It is the recommendation of the Columbus Comprehensive Plan that neighborhood parks:

- Be provided within 1/2 mile of all residents.
- Be located on a minimum of 5 acres, where possible.
- Be connected to the surrounding neighborhood, activity centers, and other parks by sidewalks and bike paths. ~ Be reserved for casual sporting activities and organized children's leagues, rather than adult league intramural sports.
- Provide opportunities for passive as well as active recreation.
- Be located on local streets or neighborhood collectors, between arterials.
- Be developed in conjunction with school playgrounds, where possible.

## **SANITARY SEWER SERVICE, STORM WATER DRAINAGE, & STREET LIGHTING**

### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

#### **Sanitary Sewer Service and Storm Water Drainage**

The entire Near Southside planning area is served by city of Columbus sanitary sewer and storm water drainage systems. A large portion of the area is provided this service by way of a combined sewer system. The combined sewer system is in the western portion of the planning area and was constructed during the late 1 800's to early 1 920's. The sewers in eastern portion were constructed between the late 1 920's and 1 950's. Flooding is a common occurrence in parts of the planning area after rainstorms. This flooding can mainly be attributed to the age of the sewer system, blockages caused by sediment, and pipes too small to handle the current amount of stormwater runoff.

In 1980 a Sewer System Evaluation Survey (SSES) was conducted by Malcom Pirnie, Inc. (MP) that assessed the City's sanitary sewer system with respect to inflow and infiltration. The result of this study showed the following Near Southside areas are experiencing storm water drainage problems: Berkeley Road between Whittier Street and Livingston Avenue, Geers Avenue between Whittier Street and Livingston Avenue, Forest Street between Rhoads and Parsons Avenues, and in the Rainbow Park and Bulen Avenue areas.

In 1997 the Division of Sewerage and Drainage will begin a three part sewer system inflow/infiltration remediation for the Driving Park area. Part One will allow for an investigation of the stormwater system in the area to determine system deficiencies. Part Two involves conducting a sewer system evaluation survey of the Driving Park area's sanitary collection system. Part Three provides for the development of a computer hydraulic model to assess remediation alternatives. Generation of cost effective immediate and long-term stormwater and sanitary system improvement recommendations, operation and maintenance practices, and guidelines for implementing recommendations for private property rehabilitation.

Through surveys, service requests, and participation on the local community commission, area residents have identified several specific locations of significant stormwater flooding and sanitary sewer surcharging.

#### **Street Lighting**

Lighting of residential and arterial streets and alleys is an important means of safeguarding Columbus citizens. According to the Division of Electricity, the Near Southside planning area is well lighted. Through the Division of Electricity's Illuminate Columbus Program, cobrahead lights on wooden poles have been installed throughout the planning area. In alleys, lights have been placed approximately 300 feet apart. On residential and commercial streets, lights have been placed approximately 200 feet apart.

Although the Division of Electricity has determined the planning area to be well-lighted, there is a perception that inadequate street and alley lighting exist throughout the area.

There are existing methods to improve street lighting in the planning area. The Division of Electricity has an assessment program based upon successful petitioning by residents of a neighborhood. The assessment program works as follows: a neighborhood submits a request to the Division of Electricity indicating the exact boundaries of the area to receive street lighting; the Division of Electricity in turn sends a petition to be signed by property owners of the area making the request; sixty percent of the property owners must sign the petition in favor of the assessment; and the petition is sent to City Council through the Clerk of Council's office.

Each property owner receives notice giving them two weeks to file protests. If protests are filed over the assessment, Council appoints a Board of Revision to hear objections. The Board' s findings go to City Council.

City Council passes an ordinance to proceed with the assessment. Council must authorize the issuance of notes. Council must also authorize the contract after the contractor is determined. After the job is done, City Council receives the final assessment, passing an assessing ordinance. Within 30 days method of payment is determined. The assessment process takes over a year to complete. This program may be particularly appropriate in areas of the Near Southside with higher home ownership such as the south eastern portion of the planning area.

The Division of Electricity is in the process of developing a master lighting plan for Columbus. The Plan will provide for the constructing of a mock street lighting display of different types of lighting styles including decorative post tops with underground wiring and lights with overhead wiring. The master lighting plan will also include a system to prioritize neighborhood lighting projects, inventory and maintenance, as well as an examination of lighting glare. In addition, Urban Infrastructure Recovery Funds can be used to fund inner city street lighting, particularly in areas around schools and parks.

The current conditions demonstrate the need to repair or replace aging infrastructure such as inadequate sanitary sewer and storm water drainage systems. The following goal, though applicable to the entire Columbus urban area, is designed to encourage the repair and replacement of aging infrastructure and improve street lighting in the Near Southside area.

## **GOAL**

- ◆ *Provide, operate and maintain adequate storm water drainage, sanitary sewer, and street lighting service for the planning area.*

In order to fully realize the goal, the following issues and recommendations should be addressed.

### *Issue*

There is a need to correct the storm water and sanitary sewer drainage problems that exist in the Near Southside. Under the current conditions section, relevant portions of the Malcom Pirnie study is cited as documentation of the drainage problems that exist in the Near Southside.

### *Recommendations*

- Complete the investigation, engineering, and construction of Sewer System Inflow/Infiltration Remediation for the Driving Park Area to alleviate sewer problems in the area.
- Identify another sewer system remediation project to alleviate sewer problems in the remainder of the Near Southside planning area, as necessary.

### *Issue*

There is not enough lighting on some streets and alleys in the Near Southside area. Inadequate lighting may pose a safety hazard for residents.

### *Recommendations*

- Install lighting in alleys whenever possible. (Division of Electricity)
- Install additional and/or provide street lighting on major residential streets including Twenty-Second Street, Ohio Avenue, Champion Avenue, and Wilson Avenue. (Division of Electricity)
- Install additional pedestrian lighting where Parsons Avenue intersects with the following: Beck Street, Forest Street, Columbus Street, and Kossuth Street. (Division of Electricity)
- Install additional street lighting where Livingston Avenue intersects with the following: Champion Avenue, Kelton Avenue, and Lilley Avenue. (Division of Electricity)
- Install additional lighting around schools and parks. (Neighborhood Development Division, Recreation and Parks Department, and Division of Electricity)



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

A number of areas and sites in the Near Southside area have the potential for listing on the Columbus Register of Historic Properties. Presently, the Old Oaks Historic District is the only area in the Near Southside area listed on the Columbus Register. The Old Oaks Historic District has a significant collection of residential architecture from the 1890s to 1920s with examples of the Queen Anne, Prairie, and Colonial Revival styles. The area contains the work of architect David Reibel and builder Charles Schneider, whose work influenced the historical, architectural and cultural development of the City. The Driving Park area is a good example of a turn of the century street car suburb.

The Rickenbacker home, located at 1334 Livingston Avenue, is a National Historic Landmark. The small frame house was the home of World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker. The National Park Service considers the house a "damaged or threatened" landmark because it is not being maintained.

Some residents would like to list other areas and sites in the planning area on the Columbus Register of Historic Properties. They view it as a way of preserving and protecting the community. Residents view the protection of historic integrity provided by historic designation as a tool to spur reinvestment interest, stabilize the neighborhood, and generate development activity.

Residents and City representatives will use Columbus Register of Historic Properties criteria to identify additional areas and sites for listing on the historic register. All nominations to the Register must meet at least one of the criteria listed below and typically be over 40 years old.

1. The design or style of the property's exterior and/or significance to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state or nation.
2. The property is closely and publicly identified with a person who significantly contributed to historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state or nation.
3. The property is identified as a significant work of an architect, artisan, engineer, landscape architect or builder whose individual work has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state or nation.
4. The property demonstrate significant craftsmanship in architectural design, detail, or use of materials.
5. The property is closely and publicly identified with an event or series of events which has influenced the historical or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

Historic resources are extremely important to a community. They link the community to its past and provide guidance for preservation decisions. If historic resources are to be preserved in the Near Southside, the following goals must be followed.

### GOALS

- ◆ *Preserve the Near Southside historic resources.*
- ◆ *Promote the concept of historic preservation throughout the Near Southside community.*
- ◆ *Encourage compatible development in historic areas.*

Several issues must be addressed if these goals are to be met. Following are description of these issues and associated recommendations.

#### *Issue*

The threat of neglect and redevelopment on the Near Southside historic resources is of concern to area residents. Some areas and sites with potential for listing on the Columbus Register of Historic Properties are in need of rehabilitation. There are also areas and sites rehabilitated with no regard for the historic significance of the area or site.

#### *Recommendations*

- Identify and seek historic designation for appropriate sites and areas. (city of Columbus, community groups, and residents)

- Move historic structures threatened by redevelopment into designated conservation districts as infill housing. (city of Columbus, developers, and community residents)
- Identify and map resources that meet historic criteria and are in good condition or have rehabilitation potential. Community residents and groups should work with the Columbus Historic Preservation Office staff to seek historic designation for the following sites:
  1. Livingston Avenue School, 744 Heyl Avenue, was erected in 1901. Additions were added in 1960 and 1966. Livingston Avenue School is a brick structure with twenty-eight classrooms. The building also has a health room, library, multi-purpose room, teachers' room, kitchen, and offices.
  2. Heyl Avenue School, 760 Reinhard Avenue, was erected in 1910. An addition was added in 1955 and it was remodeled in 1962. Heyl Avenue School is a brick structure with twenty-two classrooms. In addition, the building has an auditorium, kitchen, teachers' room, health room, library, project room, and office.
  3. South High School, 705 Ann Street, was erected in 1923. An addition was added in 1957 and the school was remodeled in 1960. South High School has twenty-six classrooms. South High has a number of other rooms ranging from administrative to instrumental music and art rooms.
  4. Bid-A-Wee Park Avenue runs in a east-west direction between Rhoads Avenue and Fairwood Avenue. Bid-A-Wee Park Avenue is comprised of conventional housing dating back to the early 1900s. Exterior materials range from brick, stucco, to wood/aluminum. The area has a mixture of one, one and a half, and two story houses.
  5. The area bounded by Livingston Avenue on the north, Rhoads Avenue on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Fairwood Avenue on the west. The identified area mainly represents one, one and a half, and two story conventional houses built mainly in the 1930s and 1940s. The exterior of the houses are made up of wood/aluminum, frame brick, brick, stone, stucco, or concrete block material.
- Residents and community organizations should work with the Columbus Historic Preservation Office to identify areas in which a significant number of historic structures exist and seek to establish these areas as conservation districts. The preservation of these structures will be encouraged. Two such areas are listed below and will be pursued for conservation status.
  - Driving Park area is part of a large area where an early auto racing track was located. This district includes Berkeley Road and Lilley Avenue between Livingston Avenue and Columbus Street. The southern edge of the district has handsome brick apartment buildings surrounding a landscaped Geers Park, while the remainder of the district has circa 1920-1940 single family brick houses. Old streetlights and the landscaped open space are unifying features in this district.
  - Ohio Avenue between Sycamore Street and Whittier Street is located south of Livingston Avenue. The architecture is substantially built, brick, late 19th and early 20th century houses. This area also includes a row of brick townhouses along Whittier Street, which forms the southern boundary of the area.

The list of potential historic sites and areas is not exhaustive. Community residents should continue to work with the Columbus Historic Preservation Office staff to preserve areas of the Near Southside planning area that has significant architectural, aesthetic, and/or historic value. Recommendations identified in the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, adopted December 1993, pertaining to general historic resources, neighborhood preservation policies, historic district policies, and historic structure policies should be followed.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

Economic development activity on the Near Southside is encouraged and supported by the city of Columbus, community residents, the business community, and investors. In 1990, the Near Southside unemployment rate was 12.6 percent. This unemployment rate is significantly higher than Columbus and Franklin County 1990 rate of 4.5% and 3.9% respectively, as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services.

The majority of the planning area's economic development activity is along Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, and Alum Creek Drive. Some commercial and manufacturing activity occurs on Whittier Street, Frebis Avenue, and Lockbourne Road. Small pockets of additional commercial activity occurs throughout the Near Southside area.

The city of Columbus through its Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Program designated two NCR streets in the area: Livingston Avenue between Fairwood Avenue and Lockbourne Road and Parsons Avenue between Frebis and Livingston Avenues. Parsons Avenue NCR boundaries extends south to Frank Road. The NCR Program is a redevelopment partnership between the City, local area merchants, and developers. The Program is designed to stimulate investment in business districts and to build the economic base of areas to create an environment conducive to business growth and expansion. The Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, one component of the NCR Program, is funded by the city of Columbus to offer building design assistance to businesses located in NCR areas.

A market research and needs assessment was conducted by Christopher D. Boring for the Driving Park Business District and the Parsons Avenue Business District. The study was designed to determine the level of potential commercial activities in the Driving Park and Parsons Avenue areas, and to identify potential business targets for recruitment.

According to the market study and needs assessment of the Driving Park Business District, there are an estimated 34 retail merchants open for business in the Driving Park Business District, accounting for an estimated 71, 000 square feet of retail space, and estimated annual sales of \$14 million. The Driving Park Business District includes merchants on Livingston Avenue between Lockbourne Road and Rhoads Avenue. The Driving Park Business District's strongest retail merchandise group is convenience goods. On the non-retail side, there are approximately 16 businesses totaling about 50,000 square feet, and 10 non-business organizations totaling 20, 000 square feet of space.

Boring concluded that opportunities in the Driving Park Business District exist for fast food/family restaurants, ice cream stand, video store, bank(s), hardware store, auto parts store, discount shoe, and second hand children's/maternity shop. On the non-retail side, there is an abundance of opportunity for entrepreneurial firms that can offer competitively-priced goods and services to other businesses, due to the Driving Park Business District's central location, large daytime marketplace, and easy access.

The Boring Market Study and Needs Assessment, prepared in May 1994 for the Parsons Avenue Business District, focused on the area of Parsons Avenue between Livingston Avenue and State Route 104. There are approximately 1,285 businesses within a one and half mile radius of Parsons and Frebis Avenues. This creates a market for retail businesses (restaurants, dry cleaners, banks) that meet the need of local employees as well as a strong market for business-to-business services such as copy shops, accounting and other financial services, and office supply stores.

Boring concluded that the Parsons Avenue Business District could support one or more of the following commercial establishments: off-price clothing stores; grocery/drug store; discount drug store; second run cinema; fast food chain; family restaurant; camping/fishing/hiking supplies; bowling alley/video arcade; auto supply store; hardware store; coffee shop; weight control center; music/video store; children's apparel; and crafts store.

In an effort to maintain existing businesses and to provide opportunities for new businesses for the Near Southside, the following goals have been developed.

### GOALS

- ◆ *Encourage the expansion of existing businesses.*

- ◆ *Identify technical assistance and supportive resources for economic development activities.*
- ◆ *Identify and encourage the development of businesses needed in the area.*

If these goals are to be met, several issues must be addressed. Following are a description of these issues and their corresponding recommendations.

#### *Issue*

There is a need to increase available employment opportunities for area residents who have very little or no education, and also to upgrade the skills of residents who are underemployed.

#### *Recommendations*

- Encourage Near Southside residents to take advantage of educational and job training programs available through the Private Industry Council, Columbus Urban League, and St. John Learning Center. (community groups and residents)
- Form an ad hoc committee to develop an multifaceted employment program for Near Southside residents that focuses on interview techniques and skills. (Economic Development Division, Driving Park Business Association, Parsons Avenue Merchants Association, Livingston Avenue Merchants Association, and community groups and residents)
- Develop an employment consortium with major employers in the Near Southside area including such organizations as Children's Hospital, and the Techneglas Company to develop training, provide jobs, and ongoing support services for area residents. (Economic Development Division, Driving Park Business Association, Parsons Avenue Merchant Association, DeVry Technical Institute, and Southeast Career Center)

#### *Issue*

A lack of support for commercial nodes throughout the Near Southside. Over the years, some businesses operating at commercial nodes may have closed because of an inability to keep up with new technology, insufficient financial resources to rehabilitate and upgrade their establishment, or a declining customer base.

#### *Recommendations*

- Facilitate and support business associations for primary business districts including Livingston Avenue, Parsons Avenue, Alum Creek Drive, Frebis Avenue, and Whittier Street. (Economic Development Division, Driving Park Business Association, and Parsons Avenue Merchants Association)
- Through area business associations, provide and encourage Near Southside businesses to utilize public and private programs designed to assist with business growth and expansion. Examples of such programs are those offered by the Columbus Trade and Development Department:
  1. NCR Investment Fund provides mortgage financing for larger commercial or mixed-use projects. The Fund provides project financing at negotiable rates and terms for substantial rehabilitation, acquisition and/or construction.
  2. Commercial Improvement Loan Fund provides for interior renovation, with the primary objective of improving storefront appearances. Non-interest bearing loans of up to \$15,000 are matched by cash or a lender of the borrower's choice. Term will generally be ten years.
  3. Facade Renovation Fund offers interest-free direct loans for \$5,000 for exterior work only. The term is usually not more than five years and leasehold improvement loans are eligible.
  4. Storefront Renovation Grant Fund offers from \$250 to \$1500 in grant matching funds for exterior facade renovation. Funds are available to property owners and small, independent businesses that are tenants of commercial use properties. Grant funds must be matched with at least equal amount of cash/loan investment. (Economic Development Division and Neighborhood Development Division)

#### *Issue*

There is a lack of support services for new and expanding businesses in the planning area.

#### *Recommendations*

- Design an incubator program in the planning area that addresses the space and support service needs of new businesses. Help the incubator to recruit and retain tenants through a coordinated community outreach program and to secure public and private funding. (Economic Development Division, Columbus and Franklin Chamber of Commerce, Private Industry Council, Livingston Park Business Association, Driving Park Business Association, and Parson Avenue Merchants Association)

#### *Issue*

There are not enough retail shops to provide goods and services to meet the needs of Near Southside residents.

#### *Recommendations*

- Seek out investors and encourage the development of one or more of the following along Parsons Avenue: off-price clothing stores, grocery/ drug combo store, deep discount drug store, second run cinema, fast food chain, family restaurant, camping/ fishing/ hiking supplies, bowling alley/ video arcade, auto supply store, hardware store, coffee shop, weight control center, music/ video store, children's apparel, or crafts store. (Neighborhood Development Division and Parsons Avenue Merchants Association)
- Encourage the development of one of the following in the Driving Park Business District include fast food/ family restaurants, ice cream stand, video store, bank(s), hardware store, auto parts store, discount shoe chain, second hand children's/ maternity shop. (Neighborhood Development Division, Driving Park Business Association, and Driving Park Area Commission)

## **SAFETY**

### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

Safety is of great concern for residents living in the Near Southside area. Residents feel their safety is threatened due to increasing gang activity as well as the sale and use of drugs by adults and youths.

In the Near Southside, the majority of gang members are male and appear to be 21 years old or younger. Crimes committed by gang members include theft, drug trafficking, drive by shootings, and assault. Gang activity is not concentrated in one particular portion of the planning area but is prevalent throughout.

As a means of reducing crime and the threat of criminal activity, a number of block watch programs have formed in the Near Southside area. Block watches are made up of residents convening for the purpose of addressing crime and other neighborhood issues. The Southside Crime Alert, one community block watch, is seeking grants to implement safety programs and to provide information and training to community residents on safety measures.

The Driving Park Area Commission (DPAC) has a block watch program for both adults and youths and has developed and implemented a number of safety programs and activities as a way of reducing criminal activity. One such program is Citizens on Patrol (C.O.P.). Through the C.O.P. Program, area residents: observe and report suspicious activity; compile information that is used for criminal investigations; make court appearances; observe, record and report public safety hazards; and distribute crime prevention and safety information. The C.O.P. Program service area is bounded by 1-70 on the north, Rhoads Avenue on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Studer Avenue and Kimball Place on the west.

The DPAC is also developing a "Community Neighbor to Neighbor Project". The purpose of this project is to combat the problems of graffiti, overturned trash containers, and garage vandalism in business and residential sections of the Driving Park community. DPAC has a Public Safety Committee responsible for teaching and promoting crime prevention, and sponsors an annual Youth Against Crime Rally. In addition, area residents participate in the Columbus Police Division's National Night Out Program. The initiatives undertaken by the Driving Park Area Commission serve as a model for the Near Southside and should be considered for expansion or duplication in other parts of the area.

The city of Columbus Police Division has developed the following goals as a means of maintaining law and order and to create and sustain a personal sense of safety and security among Columbus residents and businesses:

1. Priority 1 runs (life threatening situations such as armed robbery in progress, suicide attempt, officer in trouble, aggravated assault in progress, riot, and sex crime in progress) will be dispatched in an average of 1.3 minutes. Total response time for Priority 1 runs, including dispatch time, will average 6.3 minutes in all areas of the city.
2. Priority 2 runs (suspicious persons, car theft in progress, fights in progress drawing a crowd, property destruction, burglary in progress next door, man with a gun, bomb threat, and accidents with injuries) will be dispatched in an average of 4.6 minutes. Total response time for Priority 2 runs, including dispatch time, will average 11.6 minutes in all areas of the city.
3. Priority 3 runs (accidents with no or slight injuries, domestic dispute with no violence used or threatened, suspicious person in a vehicle, dead on arrival, burglary report) will be dispatched to an officer within 30 minutes. An officer will be at the scene of the incident within 40 minutes of the initial request. Response to priority 3 incidents depends on staffing and the number of higher priority calls for service pending.
4. Priority 4 runs (found property, parking violations, deliver message, loud music, simple assault report, shoplifting report) will be dispatched to an officer within 60 minutes. An officer will be at the scene of the incident within 70 minutes of the initial request. Response to priority 4 incidents depends on staffing and the number of higher priority calls for service pending.
5. Priority 5 runs (house check, information calls, meet the officer) will be dispatched when the district officer is available. The district officer will respond as time permits.

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Source: "Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance" (Draft), March 4, 1996, Planning Division, City of Columbus.

Near Southside residents should use the City's goals when determining whether police response time is adequate for emergencies in their community. The Near Southside is an urban area with great potential for redevelopment and

revitalization. However, the impact of crime within the area may adversely affect this potential. As a means of diminishing the impact of crime on the area, the following goal has been developed.

## GOAL

- ◆ *Provide a safe environment for persons living and working in the Near Southside area through crime reduction activities.*

Several issues must be addressed if this goal is to be met. Following are description of these issues, as well as sets of associated recommendations.

### *Issue*

Gang presence and activity have increased in the planning area over the past five years. Residents complain of youths and young adults congregating throughout the planning area. The youths and young adults appear to be 21 years of age or younger and wear similar colors or symbols stitched or drawn on their clothing, suggesting gang activity. These youths and young adults are responsible for such crimes as vandalism, theft, and assault. The increased presence of gangs is of concern for planning area residents and should be addressed.

### *Recommendations*

- Identify, monitor, and discourage youths and young adults from participating in gang activity in the Near Southside planning area. (Police Division, community groups, and residents)
- Develop an at-risk program for young adults and youths that provides teaching and training to participants on developing positive self-images, handling peer pressure, and taking responsibility for their actions. (community groups and human/social services agencies)
- Sponsor and develop basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer leagues for youths and young adults as an alternative to participating in gangs. (Recreation and Parks Department, community groups, and residents)
- Provide training for school-aged individuals to discourage them from becoming involved in gangs. (Police Division, schools, community residents, and human/social service agencies)
- Provide training to community residents through the Police Division on how to identify gangs and gang-related behaviors. (Police Division and community groups)
- Encourage the establishment of additional block watches in all Near Southside neighborhoods as a means of discouraging gang activity and other criminal activity in the area. (Police Division and community groups and residents)

### *Issue*

The sale and distribution of illegal drugs in the planning area is of great concern to residents and business owners. According to crime statistics maintained by the Police Division Community Liaison Section, the number of drug abuse/trafficking arrests decreased in the planning area between 1993 and 1995. In 1993, 384 drug abuse/trafficking arrests were made. The number decreased to 344 in 1994 and 299 in 1995. Although records reveal a decline, residents and business owners would like to see a further reduction or elimination of the problem in their community.

### *Recommendations*

- Develop a crime patrol made up of neighborhood residents to monitor locations where drug sales and distribution are occurring and report to the Columbus Police Division or other appropriate law enforcement agency, when appropriate. (Police Division and community residents)
- Adopt crime reduction measures such as the defensible space concept used in the Weinland Park neighborhood. (Division of Traffic, Engineering, and Parking, community groups, and residents)
- Identify and report to the Columbus Police Division illegal drug operations and individuals involved in the distribution of drugs. (community residents)
- Conduct public workshops in coordination with police officials to discuss and evaluate programs aimed at providing neighborhood safety. An example is a neighborhood block watch program. (Police Division, neighborhood groups, and human/social service agencies)

#### *Issue*

Residents feel that there is a lack of adequate police presence in the Near Southside planning area. The planning area is served by Precincts 11 and 12. Precinct 11 has six cruiser districts. Precinct 12 has four cruiser districts. The focus of City government is to develop unified response time for all parts of the City. A discussion found in the current condition portion of this section summarizes the City's goals for police response time.

#### *Recommendations*

- ❑ Assign additional cruiser districts to the planning area as warranted by increases in crime. (Police Division)
- ❑ Assign police officers to foot patrol duty in the planning area. (Police Division)
- ❑ Report all crimes, however minor, to the Police Division. Levels of service are based in part on these reports. (community residents)
- ❑ Monitor crime statistics for the planning area to evaluate the level of police service. (Police Division)
- ❑ Monitor police response times to determine if the City's response time goals are being met in the planning area. (Police Division and residents)

#### *Issue*

There is a growing problem of graffiti and vandalism in the Near Southside planning area. Evidence of graffiti and vandalism is apparent throughout the planning area. Occupancy appears to have no bearing on whether buildings are vandalized.

#### *Recommendations*

- ❑ Encourage neighborhood residents of the Near Southside planning area to develop block watch crime prevention programs similar to the existing Driving Park Area Commission's "Community Neighbor to Neighbor" project and the Southside Crime Alert Program. (community residents)
- ❑ Identify and monitor persons responsible for acts of vandalism and graffiti and report them to the Police Division or other appropriate entity. (community residents)
- ❑ Assign police officers to foot patrol duty in the planning area as a deterrent to individuals committing acts of destruction and vandalism. (Police Division)



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

The availability of adequate community services is extremely important to the quality of life for persons living and working in the Near Southside planning area.

The Columbus Division of Refuse Collection makes regular trash collections Monday through Friday in accordance with a color-coded rotating holiday schedule. Under this rotating schedule, areas in the City are assigned one of five colors: navy, pink, ruby, gold, or gray. After each holiday recognized by the city of Columbus, a collection day moves ahead one day. The color-code never changes. Color-code collection days are published on the vital statistics page of the Columbus Dispatch. Any resident may also call 645 followed by the four letters of their color to reach a recorded message giving the current collection day.

Bulk collections are made by the Columbus Division of Refuse Collection on an appointment basis. Columbus residents should call 645-73774 (TRSH) to schedule a bulk pick-up.

A number of community agencies/organizations provide counseling, health care, housing, and behavioral rehabilitation services to community residents. Also, employment and business development assistance, child development services, and hot meals are available to community residents.

The planning area is presently served by an area commission, three civic associations, and a neighborhood improvement association. They are Driving Park Area Commission, Deshler Park Civic Association, Driving Park Civic Association, Southside Community Action Network Civic Association, and Livingston Park Neighborhood Improvement Association.

Area commissions, civic associations, and neighborhood improvement associations are citizen organizations whose purpose is to protect, enhance, and ensure quality of life for those who live and work in Columbus communities. A distinction between area commissions, civic associations, and neighborhood improvement association is that area commissions are established by City code and are an extension of City government, while civic associations and neighborhood improvement association are not.

In addition, the function and duties of area commissions as defined in Chapters 3109 and 3111 of the Planning and Platting Code are:

1. Identify and study the problems and requirements of the Commission area;
2. Aid and promote communication within the Commission Area and between it and the rest of the City;
3. Initiate, review, and recommend criteria and programs for the preservation, development and enhancement of the Commission Area, including, but not limited to, parks, recreational areas, sidewalks, streets and traffic;
4. Recommend priorities for and review government services and operation of the various departments in the Commission Area; and
5. Recommend persons from the Commission Area for nomination to membership on City boards and commissions which make decisions or recommendations affecting the Commission Area.

Livingston Avenue Collaborative for Community Development (LACCD) is a partnership of area community organizations and local residents established to relieve the severe economic, social, and physical distress that plagues the area along Livingston Avenue. Included in this collaborative are the Driving Park Civic Association, the Driving Park Business Association, Driving Park Area Commission, the Livingston Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, and the Olde Oaks Civic Association. LACCD will become the area's primary community development organization and will initiate activities designed to attract employment opportunities; increase supply of good, affordable housing; and foster a nice, safe place to live.

The Livingston Avenue Collaborative for Community Development will concentrate on communities south of downtown Columbus. The area is bounded by 1-70 on the north, Whittier Street and Livingston Avenue on the south (Livingston Avenue is southern boundary from Studer to Parsons), Rhoads Avenue on the east, and Parsons Avenue on the west. (The Livingston Avenue Collaborative for Community Development purpose statement)

In an effort to maintain existing community services and to provide opportunity for new services for the Near Southside, the following goal has been developed.

## GOAL

- ◆ *Provide and maintain adequate public and private community services to improve the quality of life for residents in the Near Southside planning area.*

Several issues must be addressed if the goal is to be met. The list below describe issues confronting the Near Southside and recommendations designed to relieve the area of these impediments.

### *Issue*

There is a need to increase drug counseling, employment, housing, and medical services in the planning area. In 1990 3,565 (15.5 percent of the planning area population) was 60 or older. Likewise, there are not enough medical and support services available for the elderly population.

### *Recommendations*

- Encourage human/social service agencies to include the Near Southside planning area within their service boundaries. (community groups and residents)
- Develop an information package to distribute to community residents, especially senior citizens, on available human/social services programs and activities. (human/social service agencies and community residents)
- Inventory human/social services available to community residents once a year to determine if and where gaps in services exist. (community residents)

### *Issue*

Dumpsters and trash containers throughout the planning area are overflowing. The trash and litter pose a health and safety problem for area residents. During the summer months the presence of rodents increases.

### *Recommendations*

- Encourage area residents and businesses to place their garbage inside of dumpsters and trash cans. (Refuse Collection Division, community groups, and business associations)
- Conduct community-wide clean-up as a way of beautifying the community. Identify ways to increase participation in clean-up efforts. (Refuse Collection Division, community groups, residents, and business associations)
- Develop a trash patrol made up of area residents responsible for monitoring trash pick-up and the condition of trash collection areas throughout the Near Southside. (Refuse Collection Division, community groups, and residents)
- Monitor and record the frequency of trash pick-ups and the conditions around trash cans and alleyways to determine if larger trash receptacles and/or more frequent trash collection is needed. (Refuse Collection Division and community residents)

### *Issue*

Portions of the planning area are not served by an area commission or civic association. All parts of the Near Southside planning area would benefit from representation by an area commission or civic association.

### *Recommendations*

- Create an area commission for the portion of the planning area bounded by Mooberry Street on the north, Kimball Place on the east, Livingston Avenue on the south, and Parsons Avenue on the west. (Planning Division and community residents)
- Form three civic associations. The recommended boundaries for the new civic associations are:
  1. Livingston Avenue on the north, Studer Avenue on the east, Whittier Street on the south, and Parsons Avenue on the west;
  2. Expand Deshler Civic Association to incorporate the area bounded by Whittier Street on the north, Fairwood Avenue on the east, Frebis Avenue on the south, and Lockbourne Road on the west; and

3. Fairwood Park on the north, North-West Railroad on the east, Frebis Avenue on the south, and Fairwood Avenue on the west.

## URBAN DESIGN: NEIGHBORHOOD/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Urban Design directs the development of the built environment in a manner that will make cities functional, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing. It is the linkage between architecture, landscape, city planning and engineering. The urban design objectives presented in this section are thus intended to identify some of the Near Southside assets and weaknesses while presenting guidelines that can direct future growth in a positive manner. The objectives will be used in the development process; in the review of rezonings; variances; and special permits. Property owners are encouraged to follow development standards as much as possible.

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

From an urban design standpoint, the Near Southside has both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths are to be protected and enhanced. Foremost among the strengths is the overall neighborhood feel. There is an integrated cohesiveness of housing, schools, parks, commerce and other uses. Neighborhoods range in age from the streetcar era following Livingston and Parsons Avenues to Post World War 11 around eastern Whittier Street to early 1970's housing in southeastern segment of the planning area. The older neighborhoods are characterized by houses with porches and commercial buildings without setback.

Unfortunately, there are as many weaknesses as there are strengths. Stores with uncompetitive footprints and lack of parking have made commercial uses less viable. Deteriorating housing conditions remain a blighting influence. Numerous streets are without sidewalks or curbs. Alleys are perceived as both a safety problem and visual eyesore. The general safety implications of design are also an issue. The close proximity of commercial and industrial land uses to residences also poses a problem, and could be alleviated by better buffering and screening.

### GOAL

- ◆ *To make the neighborhood as aesthetically pleasing, safe, comfortable, and environmentally sound as possible.*

As a means of enacting the aforementioned goal in the Near Southside area, the following issues and corresponding recommendations have been identified.

#### *Issue*

Alleys in the Near Southside are ill kept, strewn with litter and debris, and are perceived as unsafe.

#### *Recommendation*

- Upgrade alleys through coordinating and improving alley parking, lighting, refuse storage, surfacing, and landscaping. (Refuse Collection Division and Division of Electricity)

#### *Issue*

There is a lack of neighborhood identity throughout the Near Southside planning area.

#### *Recommendations*

- Establish features to distinguish: different neighborhoods in the Near Southside planning area. (Planning Division, Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, and community residents)

#### *Issue*

- Excessive vehicular speed on neighborhood streets is posing dangerous situations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vehicular traffic.

#### *Recommendations*

- Select pilot streets such as Deshler, Newton, and Columbus as candidates for establish criteria for the selection of traffic control locations and design mechanisms. (Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Planning Division)
- Establish criteria for the selection of traffic control locations and designs for the Near Southside planning area. (Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Planning Division)

*Issue*

There is not enough available land throughout the Near Southside to comprehensively plant street trees and landscape in the area.

*Recommendations*

- Establish a green space system that integrates bikeways into this system. (Planning Division, Recreation and Parks Department, and community residents)
- Explore the option of planting trees on private property in the northwestern portion of the planning area. The reason is because narrow right-of-way exists in this area. (Recreation and Parks Department and community residents)

*Issue*

There is a lack of ownership felt by residents of the Near Southside for 300 gallon trash containers. The result is neglect and disregard for the trash containers and the area that surrounds 300 gallon trash containers.

*Recommendations*

- Replace 300 gallon trash containers with smaller 90 gallon containers, where appropriate. (Division of Refuse)
- Educate Near Southside residents about appropriate use in and around trash containers. (Division of Refuse)
- Better place and group 300 gallon trash containers throughout the Near Southside area. (Division of Refuse)

*Issue*

There are no buffer standards for industrial uses and inappropriate manufacturing uses are adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

*Recommendations*

- Encourage the relocation of manufacturing uses, particularly those that emit or have as an integral part of their operation - noise, odor, truck traffic, and/or hazardous materials, along Alum Creek Drive and Frebis Avenue east of Burstock Place. (community residents)
- Encourage manufacturing uses in residential neighborhoods to incorporate the following buffering standards:
  - Screen loading facilities, refuse containers and material storage areas. Storage materials should be stacked not to exceed the height of the screen.
  - Screen parking facilities to provide safe, visual access. All parking areas adjacent to arterials and residential areas should have a headlight screening of thirty (30) inches minimum height along and parallel to the site. Parking areas with a combination of berm, wall, hedge, or other opaque material should have a screening height between 30 and 42 inches. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)
- Encourage screening between residential and industrial land uses in one of the following forms:
  - Mounding with a slope of at least three to one width to height ratio and should drain in a manner that will not cause more water to flow onto adjacent properties.
  - Landscape materials - when the screening of live plants is installed, alone or in combination with other materials, plants shall be selected for year round dense foliage adequate to protect residences from headlight glare.
  - Walls of stone, brick.
  - Fences, particularly in combination with hedges or climbing plants. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

*Issue*

There is a lack of redevelopment criteria for the Near Southside planning area.

*Recommendations*

- Direct redevelopment in a manner that will preserve the existing residential and historic character of the area. (Planning Division, Development Regulation Division, and community residents)
- Delineate and conserve areas containing housing resources in good condition or with potential for rehabilitation. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

- Encourage the development and/or redevelopment of residential districts at or below medium density (below 17.4 dwelling units per acre). (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)
- Encourage pedestrian oriented redevelopment:
  - Provide pedestrian scale street lighting and street furniture, where appropriate;
  - Vest pocket areas;
  - Trees should be used extensively along transportation corridors; and
  - All wiring should be located underground. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

*Issue*

Poor signage is negatively impacting the quality of the Near Southside environment.

*Recommendations*

- Encourage signage that enhances aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)
- Promote signage that is readable, appropriate to zoning districts and roadway characteristics; compatible with surroundings; and properly constructed, installed, maintained and removed (once obsolete). (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

*Issue*

There is a negative image of overhead wires on the visual character of the Near Southside planning area.

*Recommendations*

- Bury or relocate overhead wires to alleys as part of the Capital Improvements Program or Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program.
- Encourage the burial of wires underground in all new development. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

**Issue**

There is a need to improve the visual image and physical character of the 1-70 corridor.

**Recommendations**

- Encourage special design criteria for the 1-70 corridor that include:
  - Landscape banks with high-level, low maintenance vegetation; and
  - Provide pedestrian-friendly underpasses; use adequate levels of lighting and creative designs. (Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Division of Electricity)
- Encourage treatment along 1-70 in the Near Southside to be similar to the treatment on the north side which was designed by the Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center. (community residents).

*Issue*

There is a lack of visual improvements in the Alum Creek Drive area. The area has an industrial/commercial makeup.

*Recommendations*

- Explore the possibility of a continuous landscaping urban design plan for the area. (Planning Division and community residents)
- Encourage large setbacks for building and parking which allows for the possibility of landscape in the walkway/bikeway. (Planning Division and Development Regulation Division)

*Issue*

There are numerous streets without sidewalks and curbs in the Near Southside planning area.

*Recommendations*

- Establish a pedestrian system that links parks, schools, and concentrating of commerce and housing. This system can be reinforced by lighting and landscaping. The area needs to be mapped and selection criteria devised that will designate streets on a priority basis. (Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Division of Electricity)

- Prioritize the installation of sidewalks on the following streets: Deshler Avenue, Newton Street/Gault Street, Columbus Street, Alum Creek Drive, and Gates Street.(Traffic Engineering and Parking Division)

*Issue*

The urban design aspects of lighting, such as establishing neighborhood identity and hierarchy of roads, are of concern and need to be addressed.

*Recommendation*

- Monitor the Division of Electricity's street lighting master plan for the city of Columbus to identify appropriate lighting standards for various Near Southside neighborhood prototypes. (community residents)

## APPENDIX

### PARKS

1. Deshler Park  
1368 East Deshler Avenue  
11 acres
2. Driving Park and Recreation Center  
1100 Rhoads Avenue  
23.20 acres
3. Fairwood Park  
1372 Fairwood Avenue  
26.54 acres
4. Karns Park  
1295 Champion Avenue  
2.12 acres
5. Kobacker Park  
570 Kossuth Street  
.34 acre
6. Livingston Park  
760 East Livingston Avenue  
9.32 acres
7. Palsgrove Park  
1415 Kent Street  
.92 acres
8. Roosevelt Park  
1046 Studer Avenue  
2.91 acres

### SCHOOLS

#### *High School*

1. South High School  
1160 Ann Street

#### *Elementary Schools*

1. Deshler Elementary  
1234 East Deshler Avenue
2. Fairwood Elementary  
726 Fairwood Avenue
3. Heyl Avenue Elementary  
760 Reinhard Avenue
4. Kent Elementary  
1414 Gault Street
5. Livingston Avenue Elementary  
744 Heyl Avenue